

MEMO

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Subject: **M4 Eastbound Bus Priority Measures Pilot –
Project Briefing for Section 85 Agreement**

1. Introduction

The project is referred to as the M4 Eastbound Bus Priority Measures Pilot project. The terms of reference for the pilot targets the provision of dedicated bus priority measures in the eastbound direction that can be used by buses and coaches to avoid congested traffic lanes. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) are the Approving Authority for the Pilot, which is being developed in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA)

1.1 Scope & Extent

The extent of the M4 Eastbound Bus Priority Measures Pilot extends from Junction 7 Maynooth to Junction 5 Leixlip/Junction 4A in the eastbound direction. The Pilot is approximately 7.8km in length, with approximately 1.5km in South Dublin County Council and the remainder in Kildare (refer to Figure 1.1 for the Study Area). Pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, a Section 85 agreement will facilitate efficient progress of the Pilot through the relevant project phases.

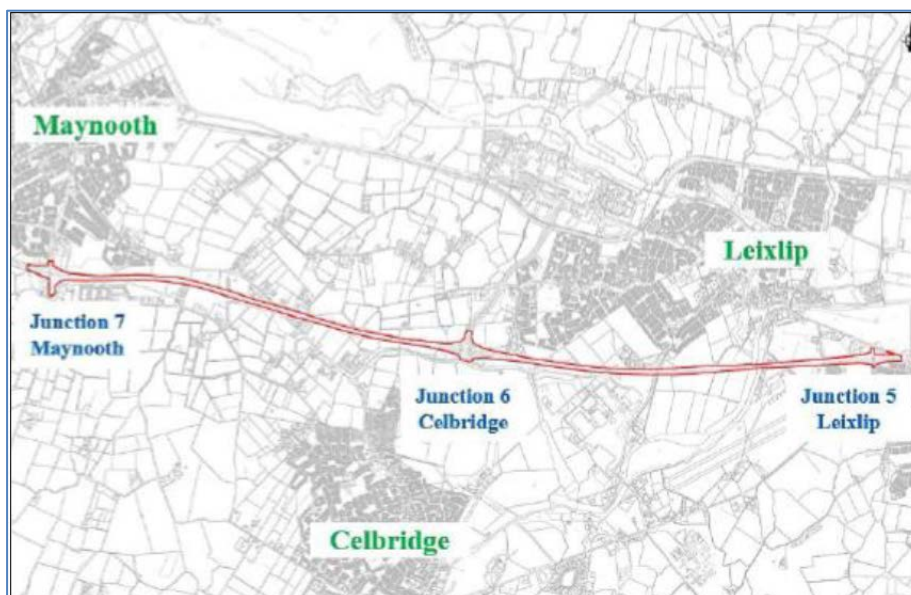


Figure 1.1 Proposed Study Area (© Google Map Data ©2021 Tele Atlas)

The Pilot is specifically focused on the existing M4/N4 as a basis for assessing bus priority measures. Engineering and environmental assessments will examine the viability of providing bus priority measures in the eastbound direction. In general, piloting eastbound bus priority measures would have the greater potential commuter benefits and ability to promote a modal shift in the first instance in comparison to a westbound only service.

The bus priority measures will aim to identify a practicable and safe means of implementing priority for bus movement within the existing road constraints to the largest extent possible.

The Eastbound Bus Priority Measures Pilot commences east of Junction 7 Maynooth as eastbound peak time congestion can extend to this location. Additionally, the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) between Junction 7 and Junction 5 is between 59,000 and 70,000. The AADT west of Junction 7 is significantly lower at 46,000.

The Eastbound Bus Priority Measures Pilot terminates at Junction 5 Leixlip/Junction 4A where it can connect to an existing eastbound bus lane from this location to the M50

2. Need for the Project

Within the context of sustainability in transport, measures should be investigated to encourage a modal shift from car reliance to public transport. Therefore, TII have decided to examine the feasibility of introducing Bus Priority Measures on one of the main Dublin arterial routes as a pilot project in the advancement of this principle. The NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035 identifies six regional bus corridors forming part of a Core Bus Network for the overall region. This scheme aims to deliver a pilot along one of these regional corridors, the M4 between Maynooth and Leixlip, and deliver upon the NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (refer to Section 2.2). The scheme is being developed in conjunction with the NTA.

2.1 Congestion

The M4/N4 has experienced significant levels of increase in AADT over the past few years with figures rising from 32,273 in 2001 to 59,350 in 2019. This traffic increase has resulted in a corresponding increase in journey times and a reduction in the journey time reliability. The route experiences strong tidal AM eastbound peaks and PM westbound peaks.

2.2 Strategic Fit

The NTA's Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035 (hereafter, the GDA Strategy) identifies six regional bus corridors forming part of a Core Bus Network for the overall region. This core network is intended to serve significant origins and destinations within the Greater Dublin Area. The core bus network will also provide greater opportunity for reliable and convenient interchange with other transport modes. As outlined in the GDA Strategy, in order to develop an efficient, reliable, and effective bus system, the core bus network should be developed to achieve:

3. Current Phase of the Project



The Pilot project currently has approval to proceed from Phase 1 to 4, subject to the Pilot passing various assessments and gateway approvals through each Phase and it may be concluded at any Phase as a result.

The Pilot project is currently finalising deliverables for a combined Phase 1 and 2. These Phases aim to assess the feasible options to deliver bus priority measures and then look to identify a preferred option.

On completion of Phase 1 and 2, the Pilot would enter Phase 3, Design and Environmental Evaluation. In this Phase, the design would be developed in readiness for the Statutory Process (in Phase 4) and the relevant environmental evaluation would be undertaken.

Phase 4 would include undertaking of the relevant Statutory Process.

All of the above is subject to the Pilot passing various assessments and gateway approvals throughout each Phase.

4. Next Step - Section 85 agreement

Pursuant to Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended, a Section 85 agreement between Kildare County Council and South Dublin County Council where Kildare will be the lead authority, will facilitate efficient progress of the Pilot through the relevant project phases outlined above.